

Westlake Cycle Track Design Advisory Committee

Meeting #1 Summary

Monday, March 24, 2014 5:30-8:00 p.m.

MOHAI – Norcliffe Conference Room

Design Advisory Committee Member Attendees

Member Name	Interest Represented
Warren Aakervik	Freight interests
Martha Aldridge	Lake Union Park users
Andrew Austin	Non-vehicular commuters
Devor Barton	Pedestrian interests
Karen Braitmayer	Westlake Ave North business owners
Dave Chappelle	Lake Union floating home or live-aboard
Thomas Goldstein	Cascade Bicycle Club
Amalia Leighton	Transportation Engineer
Sarah McGray	Bicycle interests
John Meyer	Air/water transportation/tourism
Martin Nelson	Westlake Stakeholders Group*
Peter Schrappen	Lake Union marina operators and boat moorage tenants
Cam Strong	Westlake Stakeholders Group*

**Note: The Westlake Stakeholders Group represents a variety of businesses and residents within the Westlake corridor.*

Staff attendees

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

- Barbara Lee
- Art Brochet
- Dawn Schellenberg
- Mary Rutherford

Mayor's Office

- Andrew Glass Hastings

EnviroIssues

- Penny Mabie
- David Gitlin
- Sara Colling

Toole Design Group

- Kristen Lohse
- Pete Lagerwey

Audience members

- Jerry Dinndorf
- Todd Banks
- Doug McElroy
- Jo Hull
- John Hull
- Pamela Hale
- Walter Cloy
- Arden Wilken
- Jack Wilken
- Brooks Whitehead
- Brock Gilman
- Dia Thibadean
- Dick Schwartz
- Jamie Lang
- Anthony Auriemma, office of Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

Note: *This document is only a summary of issues and actions in this meeting. It is not intended to be a transcription of the meeting, but an overview of points raised and responses from SDOT and DAC members.*

Welcome from Mayor's Office

Andrew Glass Hastings welcomed the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) on behalf of Mayor Murray. He passed on the mayor's high hopes for the process and outcome of this committee. The mayor sees this project as a key piece of the city's bike infrastructure and hopes to make this a model bike facility initiative. The mayor thanks this committee for spending their valuable time on this work.

Greeting from Councilmember Rasmussen's office

Anthony Auriemma, Legislative Assistant to Seattle City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen, spoke on behalf of councilmember Rasmussen, noting the Councilmember's support for the Westlake Cycle Track project.

Introductions and definitions of success

Penny began the meeting by reviewing the draft ground rules:

- Start/end on time
- Silence cell phones
- Come prepared
- Listen respectfully
- Speak from interests, not positions
- Participate in the process

She reviewed the meeting agenda:

1. Introductions from DAC members and project staff
2. DAC members list their definitions of success for the process and outcome
3. Review of the DAC draft charter and work plan
4. Project team present the project background and design process
5. Questions and answers

The DAC members each introduced themselves, who they represent, and their reasons for being at the table. The project team, SDOT staff and audience members also introduced themselves.

Penny then asked the DAC members to share their measures of success for this committee which she recorded on flip chart paper.

The following two items were noted by Penny as shared priorities shared among the committee members:

- Safety

- Ensuring people feel heard throughout the process

Other responses included:

- Meet the needs of the businesses and residents on the Westlake Avenue North corridor
- Preserve access to maritime business
- Preserve access for freight and transit on Westlake Avenue
- Create a model facility that is safe for all ages and abilities
- Create an accessible facility that preserves accessibility to transit

Review of draft charter and work plan

Penny lead a review of the draft charter calling out the committee purpose: *The purpose of the Westlake Cycle Track Project is to improve the safety, connectivity and inclusiveness for all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicyclists, motor vehicles, transit and freight) in the Westlake Avenue North right-of-way. The Design Advisory Committee (DAC) will be comprised of stakeholders representing various interests. The DAC will provide the Seattle Department of Transportation with feedback during design of a protected bicycle lane within the Westlake Avenue North right-of-way.*

Comments

- Martin Nelson, Westlake Stakeholders Group, asked if SDOT has already decided on a design or will SDOT be listening to the members of the committee.
 - Barbara Lee, SDOT, responded no, SDOT has not completed a design. Project designer Toole Design Group is developing corridor alignment options that will be presented to the DAC for input at the third meeting.
- Sarah McGray, bicycle interest, asked if the members will have an opportunity to look at and think about the designs prior to meeting.
 - Penny responded yes, the members will be sent materials ahead of time.
- Warren Aakervik, freight interests, asked if there is a difference in nomenclature between the words “alignment” and “design.”
 - Barbara responded yes, the current phase is a concept phase where the team is collecting information so the existing conditions along the corridor can be better understood. This will allow the team to develop schematics of potential “alignments.” SDOT will recommend an alignment that will complete Phase 1. Phase 2 will take that alignment and develop the design.
- Thomas Goldstein, Cascade Bicycle Club, noted there are different terms for what this facility is called: “Westlake cycle track” and “Westlake protected bike lane.” He suggested consistency in terminology.
 - John Meyer, air/water transportation/tourism, noted that “track” implies speed.
 - Thomas responded that Cascade Bicycle Club cares about speed reduction, so a term that doesn’t imply speed would be his preference.

- Cam Strong, Westlake Stakeholders Group, offered that this raises the question of what a cycle track is, and noted that the definition matters to this committee.
 - Penny responded that the presentation will cover the definition of a cycle track so the committee can hold the nomenclature discussion for later.
- Penny asked the DAC when it is reasonable to receive materials before meetings.
 - The DAC agreed that receiving materials three business days (i.e. on the Wednesday before a Monday) meeting is reasonable.
 - Dave Chappelle, Lake Union floating homes and live-aboards, asked if materials will be printed and brought to the meetings.
 - Penny said SDOT will tell the committee if they are not going to print something.
 - Cam asked if the materials will be posted electronically to the website.
 - Barbara responded yes.
 - Penny clarified that draft materials for DAC review would not be posted.
 - Devor asked if everything posted to the website would be accessible for people who are visually impaired.
 - Art Brochet, SDOT, responded some materials with graphics would be difficult to make accessible but they could talk about how to make accommodations.

Penny continued with the draft charter document noting that the members are serving as liaisons to their represented interest. A regular agenda item will be to check in with members about what they are hearing from their constituents.

Comments

- Martin asked how quickly the meeting notes will be available.
 - Penny responded the meeting summaries typically take a week. The team needs time to write and review.
 - Martin asked if the members would be able to share with SDOT if they think items were missed in the notes.
 - Penny responded yes, draft summaries will be provided to the DAC for review. The facilitation team will take comments into account and revise the summary if needed. She noted the notes are intended to be a summary and not a transcript.
 - Martin clarified that the DAC would receive the notes the Monday after each meeting.
 - Penny said yes.
 - Cam noted his appreciation for the integrity of the process that bringing notes back to the committee adds.
 - Penny added that she is accountable to the committee. If there is something they need, let her know.
 - Cam clarified that these items will be added into the charter.

- Penny said yes, the group will see the revised charter at the next meeting.
- In response to Penny’s note on meeting attendance, Cam asked that the meeting dates get on the calendar sooner rather than later so members can plan around meetings.
- Amalia Leighton, Transportation Engineer, asked how Penny will track whose turn it is to speak.
 - Penny said she tracks hands raised, or if members want to get in the queue to say something, they can stand their name card up on the table.
 - The committee agreed to that system.
- Thomas noted the fact sheet is a good document. He is concerned about the committee falling into topic “rabbit holes” and suggests clear boundaries for what is in bounds and out of bounds for discussion. The committee is intended to have a “how” conversation rather than an “if” conversation.
 - Penny reminded the committee they are to provide feedback to SDOT and referred them to the committee’s purpose statement in the draft charter that confirms this point.
- Penny asked if the committee is comfortable sharing their emails with each other.
 - The committee agreed.
 - Penny said the project team will email out the member roster including Penny’s contact information.

Penny then provided a high-level overview of the DAC’s draft work plan.

Comments

- Cam suggested the public meetings be held within the Westlake corridor.
 - Penny said the team would take that under consideration and welcomes the committee’s input on venues for the public meetings.

Presentation: Creating an all ages and abilities bicycle network

Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT, presented SDOT’s goal within the Road Safety Action Plan to reach zero traffic fatalities. The Westlake Cycle Track project falls within that plan as a way to add predictability for all users within the corridor. She defined cycle tracks (aka protected bike lanes) as separated physically from moving vehicles and distinct from pedestrian walkways. They are a means for bicyclists of all ages and abilities to travel safely via corridors largely free of pedestrians or vehicles. She showed examples of various cycle track designs around the U.S. and within Seattle.

Presentation: Project background, design process and engagement

Art Brochet, SDOT, presented an overview of the project’s history and design process. He said the corridor does not have clear delineation of spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars, which leads to unsafe conditions.

- Martin asked if there are documented statistics on collisions Art could share with the committee. He questioned why SDOT would say there are so many accidents without documented evidence.

- Art said SDOT will review available information for the committee.

Art continued the presentation, outlining the corridor characteristics.

- Andrew Austin, Transportation Choices Coalition, pointed out that transit should be included within the characteristics.
 - Art agreed and committed to adding that to the presentation in the future.
- Cam asked if there is data on the number of bicycles using the corridor.
 - Thomas said Cascade Bicycle Club does bicycle counts on the Fremont Bridge that could indicate number of riders.
 - Cam noted technical issues with the Fremont Bridge bicycle counter and questioned its reliability.
 - Art responded that SDOT will share data collected by the project, and existing SDOT data.
- Peter Schrappen, Lake Union marina operators and boat moorage tenants, suggested including a date on the project planning history timeline indicating when the Westlake community was notified of the cycle track.
 - Art noted the timeline presents planning milestones.
- Warren asked when Dexter became a major bike route.
 - Barbara said that around 2010/2011 a paving project made improvements to the bicycle route. There were already bike lanes on Dexter before the project.
 - Cam said he is a resident there and the corridor was redesigned to establish bike lanes and there were no bike lines prior to that.
 - Thomas said Dexter has been a regular ride of his for a long time and that Dexter had sharrows before the paving project.

Art continued with the presentation, noting that part of the funding for this project comes from leftover funds from the Spokane Viaduct Project as well as other bonds.

- Martin asked if bonds will need to be voted on or if they are a general obligation of the city.
 - Art said these bonds have already been voted on so this project will require no new votes for bonds.

Art reviewed the project schedule noting the existing business/resident survey and upcoming moorage survey.

- Warren asked if the moorage tenant survey is current or upcoming.
 - Art said the current survey was aimed at businesses and residents and the moorage tenant survey is upcoming.
 - Warren said he looked at the current survey and it wasn't relevant to freight.

- Art said it would be good to talk with Warren about what would address freight interests. Within the current survey, questions surrounding deliveries, loading and unloading did incorporate some freight use.
- Martin asked if the studies within phase 1 will be released to the public.
 - Art responded yes, both the full studies and summary reports will be available to the committee and to the public.
- Amalia asked SDOT to explain the City's Complete Streets policy.
 - Barbara said the project team is in communication with the Complete Streets manager. This project does embrace Complete Streets because it provides dedicated spaces.
 - Barbara explained Complete Streets is an ordinance where capital projects consider additional improvements to a corridor that happen at the same time. Funding is shared.
 - Andrew clarified that basically it is making sure all users' needs are met.
 - Warren added that there is a hierarchy within the Complete Streets policy that places priority for trucks on major truck streets. He noted items such as landscaping that can impair visibility for freight.
- Sarah asked if there will be a survey for bicyclists using Westlake.
 - Art said they are figuring out how to do that. They would be interested in working with the committee to ensure a potential survey is reliable and well used.
 - Sarah suggested reaching out to South Lake Union businesses and bike shops to reach cyclists.
 - Devor suggested setting up booths on Bike to Work Day and putting up billboards in the corridor.
- Peter asked if there was outreach targeted at the Westlake community.
 - Art said there was outreach through the Bike Master Plan. People used GIS mapping to define both their routes and the conflict areas.
 - Sarah asked if SDOT could synthesize the Westlake corridor data that came out of the Bike Master Plan for reference.
 - Kristen Lohse, Toole Design Group, said she knows that data well. It indicates people want a facility on Westlake. It is preferred as a flat route, lower stress route and as a more direct connection to destinations. Within the Bike Master Plan appendices there are comments and Westlake is searchable. She noted they could pull comments out for the committee.

Kristen presented the design process. She said it begins with defining the problem.

- Cam asked if the problem statement is written as he hadn't seen one.
 - Penny said it was discussed on a previous slide but the team will make sure it's posted on the website.

- Kristen said the design team is just concluding the assessment stage. They will be bringing alignment design options to the DAC in the third meeting and then to the community at the May Open House.

Art presented the project's community engagement efforts. He concluded the presentation asking the committee if they had suggestions for what should be included in the presentation to the public.

- Cam clarified that what has been discussed throughout the presentation would be included.
 - Art agreed.

Additional presentation Q&A

- Warren asked how surveys are being used to affect SDOT decision-making.
 - Kristen said the purpose of the survey was to get a sense of people's loading and parking needs as well as to elicit more complete information.
- Warren asked if High Capacity Transit is being incorporated into planning.
 - Barbara said yes, they are coordinating with the High Capacity Transit (HCT) team. The HCT team is early in the process and Westlake is one of five corridors being studied for South Transit 3. The grant for the Westlake Cycle Track project stipulates that the funds must be obligated by the end of 2015, so it will be far ahead of the HCT effort.
 - Art clarified that "obligating funds" means making a commitment to use them.
 - Sarah asked what happens if this project is in direct conflict with the objectives of HCT.
 - Barbara said because HCT is so early in the planning process, they are still studying corridor options, it is not funded, and Westlake is one of five options so it may not even be selected. The Westlake Cycle Track project is necessary to address existing safety needs within the Westlake corridor.
 - Mary Rutherford, SDOT, added the SDOT Policy and Planning department looks at all projects at once to ensure coordination and best decisions. There is a staff person, neutral to any of the projects, who performs that review.
 - Devor noted that the DAC's work will inform what SDOT decides.
- Cam commented that the presentation, as well as other documents, should include the problem statement.
- Cam said one of the community's concerns is safety, especially during the six months of the year when the Westlake corridor area becomes more active. He has previously asked SDOT to put up "slow bike" signage for this area and "high speed" signage for Dexter and repeated that request for this upcoming high season.
 - Thomas said he wants to caution the committee about mission creep. The DAC should limit discussions to the Westlake Cycle Track.
 - Cam said this is a safety concern and the committee is concerned about safety.
 - Penny noted that the question has been referred to SDOT to address.
- Amalia suggested discussing within the presentation all the City's modal plans under the Complete Streets policy, including transit, freight, pedestrian, etc. All these projects are related.

- Thomas added there are a number of trends that influence transit decisions, such as the number of vehicle miles declining, the decline in the number of people getting their licenses and one third of people riding bikes earn \$30,000 or less.
- Martin asked when the presentation will be sent out.
 - Penny said it will be posted to the website and the team will send the PDF to Martin and others who request it.

Concluding remarks

Following Q&A, Penny returned to the nomenclature question about what to call this project.

- Art provided the project name background. The city considered shifting the terminology from “cycle track” to “protected bicycle lane,” but because the current name has been used consistently in materials and media coverage, it is now recognized by the community as a cycle track. If the committee would prefer something else, that is up for discussion.
 - Thomas said his concern was to just be specific.
 - Penny suggested calling it a cycle track with “protected bicycle lane” in parenthesis the first time it is used so people know it is the same thing.
 - Warren asked if either name predetermine design.
 - Dawn responded that no, “cycle track” and “protected bicycle lane” mean the same thing.
- Cam said he still wants a clear definition of what a cycle track is.
 - Thomas said cycle track has design elements that incorporate safety. Recreational cyclists use other routes. Westlake is for all ages and abilities.
 - Penny clarified the cycle track is not a high speed facility.
 - The committee discussed the term “recreational bicyclists.”
 - Karen Braitmayer, Westlake business owners, noted the term makes her think of families with kids. She asked what that type of cyclist would be called.
 - Thomas answered the term “cyclists” incorporates all modes of cycling.
 - Sarah said it’s important to define the users.
 - Penny said the project team will clarify these terms to bring back to the committee.

Following the presentation, Penny asked the DAC members to share any additional thoughts.

- Peter said he’s nervous about parking seeming like an off-handed concern. This is about access to people’s livelihood.
- Dave agreed with Peter. He has personally seen three accidents. There is a broad mix using this corridor.
- John agreed there are a lot of different people out there and he pays high rent because of the parking. He sees kids on bikes and it scares him.
- Warren said the survey should cover what people need for this transportation corridor.

- Martin said the city has developed around the maritime industry. He is concerned about its viability.
- Andrew said he is looking forward to next steps and learning about needs.
- The committee discussed adding a brief public comment period at the end of each meeting.
 - Art said he would check into any potential regulations on limiting the time of the public comment period.

Next steps

The next meeting is Monday, April 7 from 5:30-8:00pm at MOHAI but in a different meeting room. The project team will email the details and material ahead of time.

Action items

- SDOT will produce the following data:
 - SDOT will provide available data that was collected for the project, in addition to existing data.
 - Summary of information developed about the Westlake corridor from recently-completed modal plans (Freight, Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle master plans).
 - Clarify terms related to cyclists.
- Toole design group will look into the following data:
 - Comments within the Bike Master Plan appendices regarding the Westlake corridor.
- SDOT will include a “problem statement” on the project charter.
- SDOT will examine any potential limiting regulations regarding public comments at future DAC meetings.
- SDOT will send the meeting summary to DAC members on Monday, March 31.
- SDOT will send applicable meeting materials for the April 7 meeting to DAC members on Wednesday, April 2.
- DAC document updates:
 - An updated charter will be shared at the next meeting
 - The work plan will be updated to include dates of the remaining 2014 meetings